

and our likings belong. We cannot bargain with it, or propose conditions; and the true mystic has no desire to do so. That is what false mysticism finds it impossible to understand about true mysticism; for if it were possible for false mysticism to understand precisely that thing—that the true mystic has no desire that the One should be what he likes—false mysticism would become true.

Mysticism, by whatever path it is attained, demands the stripping off of our personalities from ourselves. We surrender them, it is true, only to receive them again. But the personality we receive again, is not the personality we surrendered. It is no longer we who like, or think, or do, but the One which likes, or thinks, or does in us. And this impersonal personality we receive does not resemble the personal personality we surrendered. It is a new birth.

This impersonal personality can neither require, nor desire, that only the qualities it likes should qualify the One. The mere idea of such exclusiveness is strange, remote, fantastic. For the impersonal personality does not like things in the same way that the personal personality liked them. It is detached from them; it knows that its being does not depend on them; its affections towards them are disinterested. Therefore the desperate cry that what we love shall be eternal, and the desperate expedients by which some apparent answer to that cry is obtained, are alien to true mysticism.

In other words the validation of human ideals is no concern of true mysticism—with one great and momentous exception—the validation of the ideal of Unity itself. Mysticism claims that this ideal is real, and that it has direct experience of its reality. And precisely because this ideal is real, no other ideal can be real.

Now the 'mysticism' for which modern science, through the mouths of some of its chief expositors, seeks to make room is simply a 'mysticism' devoted to the validation of human ideals. Since human ideals are never complete (or they would not be ideals), the validation for human ideals is merely the perpetuation of Dualism. The good is real, the bad is not; spirit is real, matter is not; the 'ought' is real, the 'is' is not. The arguments by which these preferences are deified is childish. It runs thus: Since the exact sciences do not give us a picture of reality, something else must. It is not certain; but even if it were, there is no ground at all for assuming that the moral preferences of a civilized European scientist supply the picture of reality which we need.

Not that those preferences are vain. The choice is not between their nullity and their omnipotence. This kind of dilemma which haunts the soul of 'religion' and 'science' alike is simply ignored by mysticism. Man's preference for the good, like everything else, is for the mystic a form taken by the One. It exists; and—this is the point—the man in whom it truly and strongly exists does not seek to have it validated. For him, and in him, it exists in its own right. The good would not be more desirable if it were proved to be the sole reality. "He who verily loves God," said Spinoza, "cannot endeavour